1. The Fall of Man and his consequent mortality

We have disposed of some very difficult questions about the beginning of the world and the start of the human race. Next on the list of subjects to be treated is the fall of the first man, or rather of the first human beings, and the origin and propagation of human mortality. For God did not create men in the same condition as the angels, completely incapable of death, even if they sinned. The condition of human beings was such that if they continued in perfect obedience they would be granted the immortality of the angels and an eternity of bliss, without the interposition of death, whereas if disobedient they would be justly condemned to the punishment of death. I have already made this point in the previous book.¹

2. The death of the soul and the death of the body

It is clear to me that I must explain more carefully the kind of death I am talking about. For though the human soul is rightly described as immortal, it has nevertheless a kind of death of its own. It is said to be immortal for this reason, that it never entirely ceases to live and to feel, even if only in the slightest degree. The body, on the other hand, is mortal in that it can be completely bereft of life, and by itself it has no life of any sort. Thus the death of the soul results when God abandons it, the death of the body when the soul departs. Therefore the death of the whole man, of both these elements, comes when the soul, abandoned by God, leaves the body. For then the soul no longer derives life from God, nor does the body receive life from the soul. This death of the whole man is followed by what is called, on the authority of the divine oracles, 'the second death'.² And this is what the Saviour meant when he said, 'Fear him, who has power to destroy both body and soul in Gehenna.'³

Now since this cannot happen until soul and body have been so combined that they cannot be sullied or separated, it may seem strange that the body is said to be killed by a death in which it is not


3. Death has passed to all mankind through the sin of the first human beings. Is it the punishment of sin in the case of the saints?

A question now arises which must not be suppressed. Is death, which separates soul and body, really a good thing for the good? If so, how can it be maintained that death is itself the penalty of sin? For the first human beings would certainly not have suffered it, if they had not sinned. Now if death could only have happened to the bad, how could it be good for the good? In fact, if it could only have happened to the bad, so far from being good for the good, it ought not to have hap-

⁴. cf. Bk XXX, 28.
pened to them at all. Why should there have been any punishment where there were no sins to be punished?

We must therefore admit that the first human beings were created under this condition, that they would not have experienced any kind of death, if they had not sinned; and yet those first sinners were sentenced to death, with the proviso that whatever sprang from their stock should incur the same punishment. For whatever was born from them could not have been different from what they themselves had been. In fact, because of the magnitude of that offence, the condemnation changed human nature for the worse; so that what first happened as a matter of punishment in the case of the first human beings, continued in their posterity as something natural and congenital.

This is because the descent of man from man is not like the derivation of man from the dust. Dust was the raw material for the making of man; but in the begetting of a human being man is a parent. Hence, although flesh was made out of earth, flesh is not the same as earth, whereas the human parent is the same kind of thing as the human offspring. Therefore the whole human race was in the first man, and it was to pass from him through the woman into his progeny, when the married pair had received the divine sentence of condemnation. And it was not man as first made, but what man became after his sin and punishment, that was thus begotten, as far as concerns the origin of sin and death.

For the first man was not reduced by his sin, or by its punishment, to the state of infantile torpor and weakness of mind and body which we observe in little children. Such was to be the early state of children, like the early state of young animals, according to the decision of God, who had cast down their parents to a life and death like that of animals. As Scripture says, 'Man was in a place of honour, but did not realize it; he has been brought to the level of the animals without understanding and been made like them.' Though in fact we observe that infants are weaker than the most vulnerable of the young of other animals in the control of their limbs, and in their instincts of appetition and defence; this seems designed to enhance man's superiority over other living things, on the analogy of an arrow whose impetus increases in proportion to the backward extension of the bow.

Thus the result of the first man's lawless presumption and his just condemnation was not a relapse — or a repulse — into the rudimentary

4. Why absolution from sin does not entail deliverance from death, sin's punishment.

If anyone is troubled by the question why those whose guilt is removed through grace should suffer the death which is the penalty of sin, this problem has been treated, and its solution given, in another book of mine, On the Baptism of Infants. There it is suggested that the experience of the separation of soul from body remains, although its connection with guilt is removed, because if the immortality of the body followed immediately upon the sacrament of regeneration, faith itself would be weakened, since faith is only faith when it is not seen in reality is awaited in hope.

Furthermore, it was by the strength of faith and in the conflict of faith that even the fear of death admitted of being conquered, at any rate in the earlier ages; and this was seen pre-eminently in the holy martyrs. This conflict would have had no victory, no glory, since there could have been no conflict at all, if after the "washing of regeneration" the saints were straightway exempt from bodily death. If this were so, surely everyone would rush to the grace of Christ, with the children to be baptized, just to avoid being released from the body. And faith would not be tested by the fact that its reward was seen; indeed, it would not be faith any longer, since the reward of its act of faith would be demanded and taken immediately.

But as it is, the punishment of sin has been turned by the great and wonderful grace of our Saviour to a good use, to the promotion of righteousness. It was then said to man, 'You will die if you sin.' Now is said to the martyr, 'Die, rather than sin.' It was then said, 'If you

5. Ps. 49, 12; 30.

6. Published in 412. The full title is De Pecatorum Meritis et Remissione et Baptismo Parvularum.


8. Tit. 3, 5.
break the commandment you will certainly die.' Now it is said, 'If you shrink from death, you will break the commandment.' What was then an object of fear, to prevent man from sinning, is now something to be chosen, to avoid sinning.

So by the ineffable mercy of God even the penalty of man’s offence is turned into an instrument of virtue, and the punishment of the sinner becomes the merit of the righteous. Then death was purchased by sinning; now righteousness is fulfilled by dying. This is true of the holy martyrs, who are presented by their persecutors with this choice; either to abandon the faith, or to suffer death. The righteous prefer to endure for their belief what the first sinners suffered for their unbelief. For if those sinners had not sinned, they would not have died; the martyrs would sin, if they did not die. And so the former died because they sinned; the latter do not sin, because they die. The effect of the fault was to bring the offenders under punishment; the effect of their punishment is now to prevent the incurring of guilt. It is not that death has turned into a good thing, when it was formerly an evil. What has happened is that God has granted to faith so great a gift of grace that death, which all agree to be the contrary of life, has become the means by which men pass into life.

5. The wicked turn a good, the law, to bad account: the good turn death, an evil, to good

When the Apostle wanted to show sin’s power to do harm when grace was not there to help, he did not shrink from saying that the law, which forbids sin, is itself the strength of sin. 'The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.' This is very true, for the prohibition increases the desire to commit the unlawful act, when the love of righteousness is not strong enough to overcome the sinful desire by the delight it affords. And genuine righteousness is never so beloved, never gives such delight, without the help of God’s grace. But the Apostle is concerned that the law should not be considered an evil because it is called ‘the strength of sin’; and so he says, in another place, when dealing with the same problem,

And so the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, just and good. Does this mean that something which is good has turned into death for me? Perish the thought! What has happened is that sin was made to show its true character: it used a good thing to effect my death, so that sin should appear for what it is, and sinner or sin should go beyond all bounds, because of the commandment.  

Beyond all bounds, because violation of the law is added, when the law itself is despised by the increased lust for sinning. Why have we thought this worth mentioning? Because, just as the law is not an evil thing when it increases the evil desire of the sinner, so death is not itself a good thing when it enhances the glory of the sufferer; when the law is abandoned for wickedness and thus produces law-breakers, or when death is accepted for truth’s sake and so produces martyrs. It follows that the law is good, because it is the prohibition of sin, while death is evil, because it is the reward of sin.  

But as unrighteousness puts all things, good and evil alike, to a bad use, so righteousness puts all things, evil as well as good, to good employment. Thus it is that the evil make bad use of the law, though as a good thing, and the good die a good death, although death itself is an evil.

Death, the severing of soul from body, is, in general, an evil

For this reason, the death of the body, the separation of the soul from the body, is not good for anyone, as it is experienced by those who are, we say, dying. This violent sundering of the two elements, which are conjoined and interwoven in a living being, is bound to be a harsh unnatural experience as long as it lasts, until the departure of all things, which depended on this interconnection of soul and body. All unpleasantness is sometimes cut short by one sudden physical blow, or by the sudden snatching away of the soul, where the speed of stroke outruns sensation and does not allow death to be felt. But never it is which in dying men takes away sensation with such a distressing sensation, it increases the merit of patience if it is endured with devout faith, though it does not cancel the term ‘punishment’. For, although death is perpetuated by propagation from the first man in the human nature, and is without doubt the penalty of all who are born, yet it loses the glory of those who are reborn, if it is the price paid for righteousness; and death, the recompense of sin, sometimes proves that there is no sin to be recompensed.

9. 1 Cor. 15. 56.

7. Some who are not reborn in baptism undergo death for the confession of Christ

For whenever men die for confessing Christ, even though they have not yet been reborn in baptism, their death is of the same value for the remission of their sins as if they had been washed in the sacred font of baptism. It is true that Christ said, 'No one will enter into the kingdom of heaven if he has not been reborn from water and the spirit;' but in another statement he made an exception in favour of those to whom I am referring. For he said, with the same generality, 'Anyone who acknowledges me before men, I shall acknowledge before my Father in heaven,' and in another passage, 'Anyone who loses his life for me will find it.'

Hence the text. 'Precious in the Lord's sight is the death of his saints.' For what is more precious than a death which ensures that all offences are forgiven and the store of merits abundantly increased? Those who have been baptized when they could not postpone their death and have departed from this life with all their sins wiped out, have won less merit than those who could have deferred their death but did not, because they chose to end their life by confessing Christ, rather than by denying him to arrive at his baptism. Even if they had denied him, this also would have been forgiven in that sacramental washing, because that denial was prompted by the fear of death. For in that sacrament forgiveness was given even to the appalling crime of those who killed Christ. But how could they have loved Christ so dearly as to be unable to deny him in the ultimate crisis, when offered the hope of official pardon? How, except by the abundant grace of the Spirit which 'insires where he wills?'

Therefore the death of the saints is precious, the saints for whom the death of Christ was the price already paid in advance. And such grace came from Christ's death that to gain him they did not hesitate to pay the price of their own death, the death which showed that what had been imposed as the penalty for sin had been turned to such good use that it brought to birth a richer harvest of righteousness. Death therefore ought not to be regarded as a good thing because it has been turned to such great advantage. For this happened not in virtue of any quality of its own, but by the help of God; so that death, which was put forward as a fearful warning against sin, is now set before men as something to be accepted when that acceptance means the avoidance

death, when it comes, takes away all feeling from the body, including the feeling of anguish at death's approach. Thus it is difficult to explain how we can describe people as dying, when they are not yet dead, but are struggling in the last mortal pangs at the imminence of death; and yet they are rightly called 'dying men', because when the impending death has arrived they are said to be dead, not dying.

Therefore a man who is dying must be living; for when he is in the last extremity, 'giving up the ghost (that is, the soul)' as we say, he is evidently still alive, because his soul has not yet left him. So he is at once dying and living; but he is approaching death and leaving life. He is still in life because the soul is still in his body; he is not yet in death, because the soul has not yet departed. But when the soul has departed, he will not be in death, but after it. Then can anyone say precisely when one is in death? No dying man can be, assuming that no one can be dying and living at the same time. As long as the soul is in the body we clearly cannot say a man is not living. Or, if a person should be said to be dying, when in his body the process is going on which ends in death, and if no one can be simultaneously living and dying — then I do not know when anyone is living.

10. The life of mortals: should it be called death?

In fact, from the moment a man begins to exist in this body which is destined to die, he is involved all the time in a process whose end is death. For this is the end to which the life of continual change is all the time directed. If indeed we can give the name of life to this passage towards death. There is no one, it goes without saying, who is not nearer to death this year than he was last year, nearer tomorrow than today, today than yesterday, who will not by and by be nearer than he is at the moment, or is not nearer at the present time than he was a little while ago. Any space of time that we live through leaves us with so much less time to live, and the remainder decreases with every passing day; so that the whole of our lifetime is nothing but a race towards death, in which no one is allowed the slightest pause or any slackening of the pace. All are driven on at the same speed, and hurried along the same road to the same goal. The man whose life was short passed his days as swiftly as the longer-lived; moments of equal length rushed by for both of them at equal speed, though one was farther than the other from the goal to which both were hastening at the same rate. There is a difference between a longer journey and a slower pace of walking. If a man passes through a more extended period of time on this road to death, his progress is no slower; he merely has a longer journey.

Now if each man begins to die, that is to be 'in death', from the moment when death — that is, the taking away of life — begins to happen in him (and we may assume this, since when this taking away is completed he will not be in death, but after death) then everyone is in death from the moment that he begins his bodily existence. For what else is going on, every day, every hour, every minute, but this process of death? And when that comes to fulfillment, and death has completed its work, then the period after death follows the period in death, when life was being taken away. And so, if one cannot be in death and in life at the same time, man can never be in life, from the moment that he begins to exist in a body which is dying rather than living. Or is he really in life and in death at the same time? In life, that is, because he is alive until life is wholly taken away; but in death, because he is dying all the time that life is being taken from him. For if he is not in life, what is it that is being taken away, until the process of diminution is completed? While if he is not in death, what is this taking away of life? When all the life has been taken from the body, we use the phrase 'after death', which would be meaningless, were it not that death was the time when life was being taken away. For if a man is not 'in death' but 'after death' when life has been taken away, when will he be 'in death', if not while life is being diminished?

11. Can one be living and dead at the same time?

Now it may seem absurd to say that a man is in death before he arrives at death; for how can he be approaching death as he passes through the periods of his life, if he is already there? In particular, it seems extremely odd to say that a man is living and dying simultaneously, when he cannot be waking and sleeping at one and the same time. If so, we must try to discover when a man is dying. Now before death comes, he is not dying, but living; and when death has come, he is dead, not dying. Thus there is a period which is still before death, another which is already after death.

So when is he 'in death'? For it is then that he is dying; and so there are three situations: 'before death', 'in death', and 'after death', and three corresponding adjectives: 'living', 'dying', and 'dead'. This makes it very hard to define when he is dying, that is 'in death', a state in which he is neither living (which is the state before death) or dead (which is after death), but dying, or 'in death'. It is evident that as long
as the soul is in the body, especially if sensibility remains, a man is alive, his constituent parts being soul and body. Consequently he must be described as being still ‘before death’, not ‘in death’. But when the soul has departed and has withdrawn all bodily sensation, a man is said to be ‘after death’, and dead.

Thus between these two situations the period in which a man is dying or ‘in death’ disappears. For if he is still alive, he is ‘before death’; if he has stopped living, he is by now ‘after death’. Therefore he is never detected in the situation of dying, or ‘in death’. The same thing happens in the passage of time; we try to find the present moment, but without success, because the future changes into the past without interval.

We must evidently then beware of using this argument to assert that there is no such thing as the death of the body. For (we might say) if there is such a thing, when is it? It cannot be in anyone; nor can anyone be in it. If a man is alive, there is as yet no death, because this is the period before death, not in death. Whereas if life has ceased, then there is no death any more, because it is now after death, not in death. On the other hand, if there is no such thing as death, what is meant by ‘before death’ and ‘after death’? Before or after what? For these phrases also are meaningless if there is no such thing as death. Would that we had ensured, by living rightly in paradise, that there really was no death! But as it is, death is a reality, and so troublesome a reality that it cannot be explained by any verbal formula, nor got rid of by any rational argument.

We had better conform to normal usage, as indeed we are bound to do, and use the phrase ‘before death’ to mean before death occurs, as in the scriptural text: ‘Do not praise any man before his death’. And after death has happened we should say, ‘This is that occurred after the death of so and so.’ And when we are using the present participle we must do the best we can with such statements as, ‘He made his will when dying’ and, ‘When dying he made this and that bequest to so and so’, although he could have done no such thing unless he had been living — and in fact it was before death, not ‘in death’ that he did it.

And we may use the same expressions as we find in holy Scripture. For the Bible has no hesitation about referring to the dead as being ‘in death’, not ‘after death’. Hence we get the statement, ‘Because there is no one who remembers you in death.’ For until they came to life again, they are correctly spoken of as ‘in death’, just as a person is said to be ‘in sleep’ until he wakes. And yet, although we say that those who ‘in a deep sleep’ are sleeping, we cannot say, by analogy, that those who are dead are dying. For those who are separated from their bodies are not still dying. (I am referring, it will be understood, to death of the body, which is our present subject.)

But this is what I said could not be explained by any verbal formula. How can the dying be spoken of as living, or those who are already dead be said, after death, to be still ‘in death’? For how can they be ‘after death’ if they are still ‘in death’? especially as we do not say that they are dying, as we say that those in sleep are ‘sleeping’ and those in a faint are ‘fainting’, those in sorrow are certainly ‘sorrowing’, and those in life are ‘living’? And yet the dead, until they rise again, are said to be ‘in death’, although they cannot be called ‘the dying’.

Hence I find it significant and appropriate — though it happened not by human design, but perhaps by divine decision — that the grammarians have not been able to decline (or conjugate) the Latin verb mortuus (‘he dies’) by the same rule as other verbs of this form. For from ortus (‘he arises’) comes the past tense ortus est (‘he has arisen’), and all similar verbs are declined in the perfect with the perfect participle. But if we ask the perfect of mortuus, the invariable answer is mortuus est (‘he has died’, ‘he is dead’), with the doubling of the u. Now mortuus is a word of the same form as fatuus (‘silly’), arduus (‘tall’), consipicuus (‘visible’) and others, with no reference to past time; they are adjectives, and as such are declined without any temporal implications. The adjective mortuus, however, is used instead of a perfect participle as if to give a conjugation for an impossible tense. And so, most appropriately, the verb cannot be declined in speech, just as the reality which it signifies cannot be declined (that is, avoided) by any action.

Nevertheless with the help of the grace of our Redeemer we may be enabled to decline (or avoid) that second death. For that death, which means not the separation of soul from body but the union of both for eternal punishment, is the more grievous death; it is the worst of all evils. There, by contrast, men will not be in the situations of ‘before death’ and ‘after death’, but always ‘in death’, and for this reason they will never be living, never dead, but dying for all eternity.

In fact, man will never be ‘in death’ in a more horrible sense than in that state where death itself will be deathless.

17. Ecclus. 11, 28; cf. Hdt., 1, 32, 7 (Solon to Croesus); the final line of Soph. Oed. Tyr.; Juv. 10, 274f.
18. Ps. 6, 5.
19. St Augustine ponders two meanings of declension, ‘to decline (inflect)’ and ‘to refuse’, or ‘avoid’.
derived from the tree of life which was in the middle of paradise, together with the forbidden tree. For all that, they took other kinds of food, except from that one tree which had been banned, not because it was an evil in itself, but in order to emphasize the good of pure and simple obedience which is the great virtue of a rational creature set under the authority of the Lord his creator. For where nothing evil was touched it is obvious that, if something forbidden was touched, the sin consisted solely in the disobedience.

Thus the purpose of the other foods was to prevent their animal bodies from experiencing any distress through hunger or thirst, whereas the reason for their tasting of the tree of life was to prevent death that might come on them unawares from any source, or the death that would come in extreme old age after their lives had run full course. It could be said that other foods served as nourishment, but that from the tree of life was a kind of sacrament. On this interpretation the tree of life in the material paradise is analogous to the wisdom of God in the spiritual or intelligible paradise; for Scripture says of wisdom, "It is the tree of life to those who embrace it." 60

21. The spiritual interpretation of the paradise of Eden does not conflict with its historical truth

Hence a number of interpreters give a symbolic meaning to the whole of that paradise, in which dwelt the first parents of mankind, according to the truthful narrative of holy Scripture. They give a spiritual reference to those fruit-bearing trees, and the others, turning them into symbols of virtues and moral qualities. They take it for granted that those were not visible and material objects, but were thus described in speech or writing to stand for spiritual and moral truths.

It is, however, arbitrary to suppose that there could not have been a material paradise, just because it can be understood also in a spiritual significance; it is like the assumption that there were not two wives of Abraham, named Hagar and Sarah, who bore two sons, one a slave's son, the other the son of a free woman, just because the Apostle finds in them the prefiguration of the two covenants; 61 or that there was no rock from which water flowed when Moses struck it, just because it can be interpreted in a symbolic sense, as prefiguring Christ; which is how the same Apostle takes it when he says, "Now the rock was Christ." 62

60. Prov. 3, 18. 61. cf. Gal. 4, 21ff; Gen. 16, 4; 21, 2.
62. cf. 1 Cor. 10, 4; Exod. 17, 6; Num. 20, 11.

And so no one can stop us from interpreting paradise symbolically as the life of the blessed; its four rivers as the four virtues, prudence, courage, temperance, and justice; its trees as all the beneficial disciplines; the fruit of the trees as the character of the righteous; the tree of life as wisdom, the mother of all good things; and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil as the experience of disobedience to a commandment. For it was certainly a good thing, because it was just, that God should have imposed a punishment for sinners; but it is not a good thing for man himself that he experiences it.

We can also interpret the details of paradise with reference to the Church, which gives them a better significance as prophetic indications of things to come in the future. Thus paradise stands for the Church itself, as described in the Song of Songs, 63 the four rivers represent the four Gospels; the fruit trees, the saints; and the fruit, their achievements; the tree of life, the Holy of Holies, must be Christ himself; while the tree of knowledge of good and evil symbolizes the personal decision of man's free will.

For it is certain that if man ignores God's will he can only employ his own powers to his own destruction; and thus he learns what a difference it makes whether he gives his adherence to the good that is shared by all, or finds pleasure only in his own selfish good. In fact, if he loves himself, a man is given over to himself so that when as a result he has had his fill of fears and griefs he may use the words of the psalm (if, that is, he is aware of his evil plight) and sing, "My soul is troubled within me," 64 and then, when he is set right, he may then say, "I shall keep watch for you, my strength." 65

This is the kind of thing that can be said by way of allegorical interpretation of paradise; and there may be other more valuable lines of interpretation. There is no prohibition against such exegesis, provided that we also believe in the truth of the story as a faithful record of historical fact.

22. The post-resurrection bodies of the saints will be spiritual, but without the conversion of flesh into spirit

The bodies of the righteous, after the resurrection, will not need any tree to preserve them against death from disease or from extreme old age, nor any material nourishment to prevent any kind of distress from hunger or thirst. This is because they will be endowed with the gift of assured and inviolable immortality, and so they will eat only if

63. cf. 4, 12ff.
64. Ps. 42, 6.
65. Ps. 59, 9.
they wish to eat; eating will be for them a possibility, not a necessity. This is what the angels also did, when they appeared in visible and tangible form. They ate, not because they needed food, but because they were able to eat, and they wanted to do so, to fit in with men’s ways by displaying some human characteristics in the performance of their ministry. For we ought not to suppose that the angels are only in illusory appearance when they were entertained by human beings.66 Though it seemed to their hosts, who did not know whether they were angels, that they partook of food because, like us, they needed nourishment. That is why the angel in the book of Tobias says, ‘You saw me eating, but it was in your own vision that you saw me’,67 which means, ‘You supposed that I took food, as you do, because of the need to restore the body’s losses.’

Well, it is possible that a more credible suggestion might be put forward on the subject of the angels. However that may be, the Christian faith has no doubts about the Saviour himself. Christians believe that even after his resurrection, when he was now appearing in spiritual, though still real, flesh, he took food and drink in the company of his disciples.68 For it is not the ability, it is the need to eat and drink that will be taken away from bodies like this. They will be spiritual, not by ceasing to be bodies, but by being supported in their existence by a life-giving spirit.69

23. The meaning of ‘animal’ body and ‘spiritual’ body; and of ‘all die in Adam’ and ‘all are brought to life in Christ’

Bodies which have a living soul, but not yet a life-giving spirit, are called ‘animal’ bodies (that is, bodies with anima – ‘life’ or ‘soul’; and yet they are not souls, but bodies). In the same way, those other bodies are called ‘spiritual’. Yet we must not allow ourselves to believe that they will be spirits; we must think of them as bodies having the substance of flesh, though never having to experience corruption or lethargy, being preserved from such a fate by the life-giving spirit. Then man will no longer be earthly, but heavenly, not because his body, made of earth, will not be the same, but because the heavenly gift will fit it for living in heaven itself, not by a loss of its natural substance, but by a change in its quality.

The first man, however, was ‘of the earth, earthly’, and he was made as a ‘living soul’, not a ‘life-giving spirit’,68 that condition was reserved for him after he had merited it by obedience. There is no doubt that his body was animal, not spiritual; this is shown by the fact that he needed food and drink to prevent its suffering from hunger and thirst; and it was preserved from the inevitability of death and kept in the flower of youth, not by that ultimate immortality, which is absolute and indissoluble, but by the tree of life. Yet that first man would certainly not have died had he not, by his offence, fallen under the sentence of God who had given him ample warning in advance. Then, though, he was not denied nourishment, outside paradise, he was banned from the tree of life and handed over to time and old age, for them to make an end of him, in respect of that life, at least, which he might have enjoyed perpetually in paradise, had he not sinned, though he would have been in an animal body, until that body became spiritual as a reward for obedience.

Therefore, even if we were to suppose that when God said, ‘On the day you eat of it, you will die by the death,’67 he referred to that obvious death in which the soul is separated from the body; still we need not see any inconsistency in the fact that the offenders were not immediately severed from the body on the actual day when they took the forbidden and mortal food. It was in fact on that day that their natural condition changed for the worse; there was a thorn on that nature, and they were barred from the tree of life as the just punishment of their offence. The result was that they became subject to the inevitable death of the body, and we are born under the same necessity. That is why the Apostle does not say, ‘The body will die because of sin,’ but, ‘The body is dead because of sin: but the spirit is life because of righteousness.’ And then he adds, ‘Then, if the Spirit of him who raised up Christ from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will bring to life your mortal bodies also, through the indwelling of his Spirit in you.’67

The body will thus be related to the life-giving spirit as it is now to the living soul. Nevertheless, the Apostle calls it dead because it is in the grip of inevitable death. Yet originally it was related to a living soul, though not to a life-giving spirit, in such a way that it could not rightly be called dead, since it could not be faced with death, as an inevitability, except in consequence of a sin committed.

But when God asked, ‘Where are you, Adam?’68 he signified the death of the soul, which came about when he forsook it; and when he said, ‘You are earth, and into earth you will go,’68 he signified the

66. cf. Gen. 18: 8; 19: 3; Tob. 11: 20.
68. cf. 1 Cor. 15: 45.
69. cf. 1 Cor. 15: 45.
70. Gen. 2: 17.
71. Rom. 8: 10f.
73. Gen. 3: 19.
death of the body, which comes about when the soul forsakes it. We must believe that he said nothing about the second death because he wished to keep it from men’s knowledge with a view to the revelation of his purpose in the New Testament, where the second death is proclaimed in unmistakable terms.  

Thus it would first be made clear that the first death, which is the common lot of mankind, resulted from that sin which in one man became an act in which all mankind shared. Whereas the second death is certainly not the common lot of all men because those are exempt ‘who have been called in fulfillment of his purpose’, those whom he previously ‘foreknew and predestined’, as the Apostle says, ‘to be fashioned in the likeness of his Son, so that he might be the first-born in a family of many brothers’. They have been rescued from the second death by God’s grace, through the action of the Mediator.

Thus it was in an animal body, the Apostle says, that the first man was created. For when he is concerned to distinguish the present animal body from the spiritual body which is to come at the resurrection, the Apostle says, ‘It is sown in corruption; it will rise in incorruption; it is sown in humiliation: it will rise in glory; it is sown in weakness: it will rise in power; it is sown as an animal body: it will rise as a spiritual body.’ Then he adds, to support this, ‘If there is such a thing as an animal body, there is also a spiritual body.’ And to show what is meant by an animal body, he says, ‘This is the sense in which Scripture says: “The first man was made into a living soul.”’ His intention in speaking in this way was to show what an animal body is, although in the account of the first man, named Adam, and the creation of his soul by the breath of God, the Scripture does not say, ‘And man was made in an animal body’, but, ‘Man was made into a living soul.’ Thus in this scriptural statement, ‘The first man was made into a living soul’, the Apostle intended us to understand a reference to man’s animal body.

On the other hand, he shows how the spiritual body is to be understood by adding, ‘The last Adam was made into a life-giving spirit.’ Here undoubtedly he means Christ, who has already risen from the dead so as to be thereafter utterly insusceptible of death. He then goes on to say, ‘But the spiritual does not come first; first comes the animal body, and the spiritual afterwards.’ Here he makes it much clearer that he finds a reference to the animal body in the scriptural statement that the first man was made into a living soul, and intends a reference to the spiritual body in his own statement that ‘the last Adam was made into a life-giving spirit.’

For the animal body comes first, a body like that of the first Adam, although that would not have died, if Adam had not sinned. Such is the body that we also have, with its nature as much changed and marred as it was in Adam, after his sin, with the result that death became inevitable for him. Christ also condescended to take such a body at first, not of necessity, but as an act of power. But afterwards will come the spiritual body, like that which has gone ahead of us in the person of Christ, who is our head, this spiritual body will follow, in the person of those who are ‘members of Christ’ at the final resurrection of the dead.

The Apostle then adds a very striking difference between those two men. He says, ‘The first man is from the earth, earthly: the second man is from heaven. Those who are earthly are like the man of earth; those who are heavenly are like the man of heaven. And as we have put on the likeness of the man of earth, let us also put on the likeness of the man who is from heaven.’ The Apostle put it in this way so that the sacrament of rebirth may even now have its effect in us; as he says in another place, ‘All of you who have been baptized in Christ have put on Christ’, although this process will not be completed in reality until what is animal in us, because of our birth, has become spiritual because of our resurrection. For, to use his own words again, ‘It is in hope that we have been saved.’

Now we have put on the likeness of the man of earth by the physical inheritance of sin and death, conveyed to us by birth; but we shall put on the likeness of the heavenly man, by the gracious gift of pardon and of perpetual life. This gift we receive by rebirth, but it comes only through ‘the mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus’. It is Christ whom the Apostle means to be understood by ‘the heavenly man’, because he came from heaven to be clothed in a body of earthly mortality, so that he might clothe it in heavenly immortality. The reason why he uses the epithet ‘heavenly’ of the others also is that they become, through grace, ‘members of Christ’, so that with them Christ forms a unity like that of head and body.

The Apostle puts this in more striking terms in the same letter: ‘It was by a man that death came; and by a man came the resurrection of...’

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50. cf. Eph. 4, 15. 51. cf. 1 Cor. 12, 27. 52. 1 Cor. 15, 47ff. 53. Gal. 1, 27. 54. Rom. 8, 24. 55. 1 Tim. 2, 5. 56. cf. Rom. 12, 5; 1 Cor. 12, 27; Eph. 5, 30.
the dead. For as it is in Adam that all die, so also it is in Christ that all will be brought to life—'brought to life', undoubtedly, in a spiritual body which will exist in relation to a life-giving spirit. But it does not mean that all who die in Adam will be members of Christ, for the great majority of them will be punished with the second deaths, which is for ever. What the Apostle means by using 'all' in both parts of the statement is that no one dies in his animal body except 'in Adam'; and in the same way no one is brought to life in a spiritual body except 'in Christ'.

It follows then that we must certainly not suppose that at the resurrection we shall have the kind of body that the first man possessed before his sin. And the saying, 'Those who are earthly are like the man of earth', should not be taken as referring to the condition that resulted from his sin. We are not to imagine that the first man had a spiritual body before he sinned, and that it was changed into an animal body as the reward of that sin. To suppose this is to pay too little attention to the actual words of the great teacher. Paul says, 'If there is such a thing as an animal body, there is also a spiritual body. As the Scripture also says, "The first man, Adam, was made into a living soul."' We cannot think that this happened after Adam had sinned, since it is the original condition of man; for the blessed Paul quotes this evidence from the Law about that condition, to show what is meant by the animal body.

24. The meaning of God's breathing into the first man, and the Lord's breathing on the disciples

There is another passage which has been thoughtlessly explained by some interpreters. This is the passage where we read, 'God breathed into his face the breath (spiritus) of life, and man was made into a living soul.' They assume this to mean not that man was then first given his soul (anima), but that the soul was already in him, and now it was brought to life by the Holy Spirit (Spiritus). They are influenced by the fact that, after the Lord Jesus had risen from the dead, he breathed on his disciples and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.' Hence they imagine that something of the sort happened on the first occasion, as if the evangelist had gone on to say here also, 'and they were made into a living soul.' If indeed this had been said, we should have taken it to mean that the Spirit of God is, in a sense, the life of souls, and without that Spirit rational souls are to be reckoned as dead, although their presence gives to bodies the semblance of life. But this was not what happened when man was created, as is clearly shown by the biblical evidence, in these words, 'And God fashioned dust from the earth into a man.'

Some interpreters have thought that this passage needed clearer explanation and have therefore put it thus: 'And God devised a man from the mud of the earth.' For the preceding passage was, 'But a spring went up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground,' and they imagined that this implied mud, that being a mixture of earth and water. For the very next statement is, 'And God fashioned dust from the earth into a man.' This is the reading of the Greek manuscripts, of which the Latin Bible is a translation. It is of no importance whether the translation 'fashioned' (formavit) or 'devised' (fonsit) is preferred, to represent the Greek einothen; though 'devised' is a more literal rendering. But those who preferred 'fashioned' had decided that it was desirable to avoid the ambiguity of 'devised', since that word is employed in general Latin usage to describe the composition of something false with intent to deceive.

And so this man, formed from the dust of the earth or from mud (for the dust was moistened) — or, to use the express words of Scripture, this 'dust from the earth' — became an animal body, according to the Apostle's teaching, when he received a soul. 'And this man was made into a living soul', that is, this dust, when fashioned, was then made into a living soul.

But, they say, he already had a soul. Otherwise, he would not have been called a man, since man is not merely a body or merely a soul, but a being constituted by body and soul together. This is indeed true, for the soul is not the whole man; it is the better part of man, and the body is not the whole man; it is the lower part of him. It is the conjunct of the two parts that is entitled to the name of 'man'; and those parts taken separately are not deprived of that appellation when we speak of them by themselves. For there is no law (as we may call it) of ordinary speech to prohibit such a statement as, 'The man has died, and is now at rest, or under punishment', when in fact he can be said only of his soul; or, 'The man is buried in such and such a place', although this can only be understood as meaning his

91. John 20, 22.
normal form of expression in holy Scripture. But the truth is that Scripture supports our contention on this point, to the extent of employing the term ‘man’ to designate the separate constituents, even during a man’s life, when the two elements are conjoined. That is to say, it calls the soul ‘the inner man’ and the body ‘the outer man’, as if there were two men, whereas the two elements together make up one man. We must, in fact, understand what is meant by speaking of ‘man made in the likeness of God’, and ‘man who is earth, and destined to return into earth’. The former refers to the rational soul, as God implanted it in man (in his body, that is) by breathing on him—by inspiration’ might be a more suitable phrase. While the latter statement applies to man’s body, as devised by God out of dust, the thing which was given a soul so that it should become an animal body, that man should be made into a living soul.

Hence, by the act in which the Lord breathed on the disciples and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’, he surely intended it to be understood that the Holy Spirit is the spirit (or breath) not only of the Father but also of the only-begotten Son himself. The Spirit of the Father and the Son is one and the same, and with the Spirit, the Father and the Son form the Trinity, the Holy Spirit being not created but creator. For that material breath which came from the physical mouth of Christ was not the substance and natural being of the Holy Spirit; rather it was a sign to enable us to understand, as I said, that the Holy Spirit is common to the Father and the Son, because they have not separate spirits, but one spirit belongs to both.

The spirit is always designated in the holy Scriptures by the Greek word pneuma, which is also the term used by Jesus in this passage, when he symbolized it by the breath of his physical mouth, in giving the Spirit to the disciples. But in the passage where it says, ‘And God fashioned dust from the earth into a man and breathed (or inspired) into his face the spirit (or breath) of life’, the Greek version does not use pneuma, the usual term for the Holy Spirit, but pneió, a word which appears more often in relation to the created world than in connection with the Creator. Hence, to mark the distinction, some Latin versions also have preferred to translate the word by flatus (breath) instead of spiritus (spirit). This word flatus also occurs in the passage of Isaiah where God says, ‘I have made every breath’, which undoubtedly means ‘every soul’.

Thus the Greek pneió is sometimes rendered into Latin by flatus (breath), sometimes by spiritus (spirit), inspiratio (breathing into, in-
have cost them much to notice, a few chapters later, but still in the same book, these words: 'And all things which have the spirit of life, and everyone who was on the dry land died'\textsuperscript{104} – which means that all things that lived on the earth perished in the Flood.

So we find both a ‘living soul’ and a ‘spirit of life’ even in the animals, according to the normal usage in divine Scripture. In this passage also, in the phrase, ‘all things which have the spirit of life’, the Greek word is πνεῦμα, not πνεύμα. Then why do we not ask, ‘What need was there to add “living”, since the soul cannot exist without being alive? And what need to add “of life” after saying “spirit”?’ But we take it that Scripture, as usual, speaks of ‘living soul’ and ‘spirit of life’ because it intends us to take the meaning as ‘animals’, in the sense of animate bodies, obviously possessed of the bodily sense perception which comes through the possession of a soul. But when we think of the creation of man we forget the normal usage of Scripture. And yet Scripture here kept strictly to its customary language to make the point that man did indeed receive a rational soul, which (the Bible intends us to realize) was not produced from water or earth, like the soul of the other physical creatures, but created by the breath of God; but that man was nevertheless created to live in an animal body, which comes into life when a soul begins to live in it. For Scripture says of the animals in general, ‘Let the earth produce the living soul’; and it also speaks of them as having ‘the spirit of life’. In this latter phrase also the Greek word is πνεῦμα, not πνεύμα; and it is obvious that the noun signifies not the Holy Spirit but the soul of the animals.

But in fact, comes the reply, the breath of God is to be taken as having issued from God’s mouth, and if we suppose it to be the soul, it follows that we must admit that it is of the same substance as God’s Wisdom, on an equality with that Wisdom which says, ‘I came out of the mouth of the Most High.’\textsuperscript{105} Yes, but Wisdom did not say that it had been ‘breathed’ out of God’s mouth, but that it ‘came out’. Besides, when we breathe out, we can expel our breath without taking from our own natural substance, the substance that makes us human beings; we breathe by taking from the surrounding air, drawing it in and letting it out by inhaling and exhaling. Almighty God equally has the ability to produce a breath which was taken neither from his own natural substance nor from anything in his subject creation; he could produce it from nothing. And to say that he ‘inspired’ or ‘breathed’ this breath when he implanted it into man’s body is the

\textsuperscript{104} Gen. 7, 47 (LXX). 105 Ecclus. 24, 3.

suitable way of expressing God’s action; for he is immaterial, as was the breath, but the breath was mutable, and he is immutable, the uncreated producing a created breath. And apart from this, I should like these people, who are ready to hold forth about Scripture without observing the linguistic usages of Scripture, to know that it is not only something of equal and identical nature with God that is said to come out of his mouth; and so I should like them to listen to, or to read, this passage in Scripture, where God is speaking, ‘Because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I shall go on to spit you out of my mouth.’\textsuperscript{106}

So there is no reason to withhold assent from the clear statement of the Apostle on this point. He is distinguishing the animat body from the spiritual, the body in which we are now from the body in which we shall be in the future; and he says,

It is sown as an animal body: it will rise as a spiritual body. If there is such a thing as an animal body, there is also a spiritual body. This is the testimony of Scripture: The first man, Adam, was made into a living soul: the last Adam into a life-giving Spirit. But the spiritual does not come first; the animal body is first, the spiritual comes later. The first man is of the earth, earthly: the second man is from heaven. Those who are earthly are like the man of earth: those who are heavenly are like the man from heaven. And just as we have put on the likeness of the earthly man, we shall also put on the likeness of the man who is from heaven.

We have already discussed these words of the Apostle.\textsuperscript{107}

Thus the animal body, with which, the Apostle says, the first man Adam was made, was not made so as to be incapable of dying, but so as not to die, if the man had not sinned. For the body which will be incapable of death is that which will be spiritual and immortal in virtue of the presence of a life-giving spirit. In this it will be like the soul, which was created immortal. The soul, it is true, may be spoken of as dead because of sin, in that it loses one kind of life, namely the Spirit of God, which would have enabled it to live in wisdom and felicity. Still, it does not cease to live with a kind of life of its own, however wretched, since it is created immortal. The same holds good of the apostate angels; they have, in a fashion, died by sinning, because they forsook the fountain of life which is God; by drinking from that fountain they might have lived in wisdom and felicity. However, they could not die in the sense of ceasing altogether to live and feel, since they were created immortal. And so, after the last judgement, when they will be hurled into the second death, that will not mean

\textsuperscript{106} Rev. 3, 16. 107 1 Cor. 15, 44-9; cf. ch. 23.
that they will even there be deprived of life, seeing that they will not
be deprived of feeling, when they are in pain.

But men who are in the sphere of God’s grace, who are fellow-
citizens of the holy angels who live in continual bliss, will be equipped
with spiritual bodies in such a way that they will sin no more, nor will
they die. The immortality with which they are clothed will be like that
of the angels, an immortality which cannot be taken away by sin; and
though the natural substance of flesh will continue, no slightest trace
of carnal corruptibility or lethargy will remain.

A question then arises which demands discussion and resolution,
with the help of the Lord God of Truth. If sensual desire arose in the
disobedient bodies of the first human beings as a result of the sin of
disobedience, when they had been forsaken by divine grace, if, in the
consequence, they opened their eyes to their own nakedness, that is,
they observed it with anxious curiosity, and if they covered up their
shameful parts because an excitement, which resisted voluntary con-
trol, made them ashamed -- if this is true, how would they have pro-
duced children if they had remained without sin, in the state in which
they were created?

But this book must now come to its close; and in any case this is too
important a question to be discussed in a constricted space. I shall
therefore postpone it for more adequate treatment in the next book.

BOOK XIV

1. The disobedience of the first man would have involved all
mankind in the second, everlasting, death, had not God’s
grace rescued many

I H A V E already stated in the foregoing books1 that God chose to make
a single individual the starting-point of all mankind, and that his
purpose in this was that the human race should not merely be united
in a society by natural likeness, but should also be bound together by
a kind of tie of kinship to form a harmonious unity, linked together
by the ‘bond of peace’. And this race would not have been destined for
death, in respect of its individual members, had not the two first
human beings (of whom one was created from no one, and the other
from him) incurred death as the reward of disobedience; and so
harmless was their sin that man’s nature suffered a change for the
worse; and bondage to sin and inevitable death was the legacy handed
on to their posterity.

Now the reign of death has held mankind in such utter subjection
that they would all be driven headlong into that second death, which
has no ending, as their well-deserved punishment, if some were not
rescued from it by the undeserved grace of God. The result is that
although there are many great peoples throughout the world, living
under different customs in religion and morality and distinguished by
a complex variety of languages, arms, and dress, it is still true that
there have come into being only two main divisions, as we may call
them, in human society: and we are justified in following the lead of
our Scriptures2 and calling them two cities. There is, in fact, one city
of men who choose to live by the standard of the flesh, another of
those who choose to live by the standard of the spirit. The citizens of
each of these desire their own kind of peace, and when they achieve
their aim, that is the kind of peace in which they live.

1. Bk. xii, 22; 28. 2. cf. Eph. 2, 19; Phil. 3, 20.